



**COOLMINE  
COMMUNITY  
SCHOOL**

**SCOIL  
PHOBAIL  
CHÚIL MHÍN**

**S.E.N.  
POLICY**

**POLASÁÍ  
RIACHTANAIS  
SPEISIALTA  
OIDEACHASÚLA**

**CLONSILLA, DUBLIN 15.  
CLUAIN SAILEACH, BAC 15.**

# OUR MISSION STATEMENT

WE STRIVE TO CREATE AN  
ATMOSPHERE OF MUTUAL  
RESPECT WHICH PROMOTES  
EXCELLENCE IN ALL  
ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE  
AND ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS  
TO REALISE THEIR FULL  
POTENTIAL.

## **INTRODUCTION / RÉAMHRÁ**

The school community recognises that “responding to special educational needs involves not just additional knowledge, skills and resources. It is a response that incorporates a lively and open-minded willingness to examine and reappraise attitudes; to challenge the barriers imposed by the established structures, systems and routines; and a commitment to continual efforts at communication and collaboration among colleagues, parents and professional partners.”(Responding to Special Educational Needs – An Irish Perspective.” Sean Griffin and Michael Shevlin Gill & Macmillan. 2007)

With this in mind this policy aims to ensure that all students experience a quality education appropriate to their needs in a changing world. The current document emerges from a review process which took place in 2010-2011 involving consultation with all the parties. This policy document aims to outline the form that additional educational support for students with learning difficulties/special educational needs takes in the school and the philosophy that underpins it.

It is written in the context of the current legislation:

- Education Act 1998
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Equal Status Act 2000 and 2004
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

This should be considered as a working document to be reviewed every three to five years.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES / POLASAITHE SCOILE**

### **School Prospectus**

This document should be read in conjunction with the School Prospectus that outlines the school policies under the following headings:

## Special Education Needs – Riachtanais Speisialta Odeachais

- The Mission Statement (working statement)
- Admissions Policy
- The Behavioural Policy
- The Anti-bullying Policy
- The Substance Abuse Policy
- The RSE Policy
- The Strategy on Attendance and Punctuality
- The Guidance Policy
- The Information Technology Policy

### **Inclusion**

The principal aim of this document is to enable students to access, participate and benefit from the education normally provided in the school to the fullest extent possible and to do so alongside students who do not have these difficulties (as far as is practicable).

### **DEFINITION / SAINMHÍNIÚ**

#### **Students with learning difficulties/special educational needs defined.**

This includes students with a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability; or a condition that results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.

### **KEY ROLES / PRÍOMHRÓIL**

#### **Roles in relation to Special Education Needs (SEN)**

The following key roles are defined within the policy:

- The role of the Class teacher
- The role of the SEN co-ordinator

## Special Education Needs – Riachtanais Speisialta Odeachais

- The role of the Resource teacher
- The role of the Special Needs assistant
- The role of the Principal
- The role of the Deputy Principal
- The role of the Parents/Guardians
- The role of the Students
- The role of the Board of Management
- The role of the Altramaí
- The role of the specialist teacher with resource hours

### **The role of the Class teacher**

- To ensure the progress of all the pupils in his/her class
- To assist in identifying and referring students who have learning difficulties
- To facilitate access to the curriculum for students with learning difficulties
- To be aware of the SEN students and what information is available on these students and to implement, where possible, the recommendations made in the psychological report
- To exchange information with the Resource teacher on the student's progress
- To co-operate with the provision of accommodation in House and State examinations
- To advise on Options
- To partake in a whole school approach to Learning

### **The role of the SEN co-ordinator**

#### ***A teaching role:***

- To teach students with SEN
- To assist in providing education to meet the needs of SEN students
- To profile and plan students' support
- To set time related targets and review

## Special Education Needs – Riachtanais Speisialta Odeachais

- To plan and prepare students, approved for reasonable accommodation, for house and state examinations

### ***Consultative role:***

- Facilitate a whole school approach to SEN provision
- Assist in the formulation of policy in this area
- Work with class teachers on curriculum strategies
- Provide information on individual students
- Further develop a knowledge base on special education
- Promote and plan staff development in this area
- Work with parents/guardians to enhance the students' learning from entrance
- Consult with students on their needs
- Advise on subject options
- Facilitate communications with parents
- Process of referrals
- Profile of students on entry

### ***Advocacy role:***

- Support students in accessing curriculum and assessment structures
- Support students transferring from Primary to Secondary

### ***An Assessment role:***

- Identify students with learning needs
- Administer testing where necessary
- Certification

### ***Liaison role:***

- Liaise with National Educational Psychological Service
- Liaise with the Department of Education and Science
- Liaise with Career Guidance

## Special Education Needs – Riachtanais Speisialta Odeachais

- Liaise with State Exams Commission
- Link with other support agencies
- Liaise with Speech and Languages Therapists, Occupational Therapists and other psychologists
- Liaise with Pastoral Care team
- Liaise with the Management team, giving them a weekly update
- Liaise with Altramaí

### *Administrative Role*

- Advise on the provision of student support
- Record keeping
- Purchase of resource materials and maintenance of stock
- Coordinate applications for Reasonable Accommodation in the Certificate Examinations

## **The role of Resource Teacher**

### *Teaching role:*

- Direct teaching of students with SEN
- Establishment of a trusting relationship with students
- Provision of education to students that meets their specific learning needs
- Profile and plan student support
- Set time related targets and review
- Preparing students, approved for reasonable accommodation for house and state exams

### *Consultative role:*

- Advocate for SEN students in the school community
- Assist in the formulation of policy in this area
- Assisting teachers where required in adapting the curriculum
- Provide information on individual students

## Special Education Needs – Riachtanais Speisialta Odeachais

- Interpret educational psychological reports
- Further develop a knowledge base on special education
- Involvement in staff development in this area
- Work with parents/guardians to enhance the student's learning from entrance
- Co-operate and consult with SEN co-ordinator
- Consult with students on their needs
- Advise on subject options
- Meeting and advising parents

### ***Advocacy role:***

- Promoting a positive image of SEN students in school
- Facilitate students transferring from Primary to Secondary
- Engage in Pastoral Care initiatives to support students

### ***Assessment role:***

- Involvement in entrance assessments
- Administer testing where necessary
- Identification of students with SEN

### ***Liaison role:***

- Link with support agencies. E.g. O.T., speech and language therapists and NEPS.
- Liaise with State Examinations Commission

### ***Administrative role:***

- Assessing and recording students' needs and progress
- Source and purchase resource materials
- Support application for Reasonable accommodation in the Certificate Examinations
- Updating files with relevant information



### **The role of Altramaí**

- Develop and maintain the SEN register for the year group
- Explain to students their SEN provision in detail. Arrange signing of commitment form. (Days, Time, Teacher and Rooms)
- Liaise with teacher teaching these students, monitor and file schemes of work
- Collate information on any student referred for discussion with SEN co-ordinator
- Process Irish exemptions as the need arises
- Manage correspondence and discuss with SEN co-ordinator. File same in respect of each student in the year group
- Attend weekly meetings
- Assist with the co-ordination of in-house exams for students who require special arrangements – identify students, identify needs and identify subjects
- Review results at times of house exams, discuss with SEN co-ordinator and agree follow-up
- Discussion of options with 1st and 3rd year students
- Assist in the profiling of students for discussion with the NEPS psychologist

### **The role of specialist teacher with resource hours**

- Direct teaching of students with SEN
- Support and contribute to the individual learning needs of the SEN student
- Co-operate and consult with SEN co-ordinator
- Liaise with mainstream teacher in the provision of this targeted support
- Consult with relevant personnel and relevant information available
- Record content covered and methodology on work scheme sheets

## **The role of the Special Needs Assistant**

The post of SNA is an integral part of our education system.

- The primary role is to support and assist the inclusion of students with SEN. The SNA role will inform and support the roles of parents and teachers.
- In this support the SNAs are seeking to maximise the student's potential and to promote his/her participation in class and school activities under the direction of the teacher.
- An SNA will work with the student(s) on their specific needs.
- An SNA will balance support provided with promoting independence for student(s)
- An SNA may be assigned to an individual or to a number of students
- A diary record will be kept for each student or group by the SNA.
- Included in the role of the SNA are the following tasks:

### ***In class***

- To assist and motivate student(s) to stay on task and to re-focus where necessary - To help organise student(s) in terms of home work diary, books and materials for class.
- To read or scribe for student(s) as appropriate.
- To assist the student(s) in following safety rules and support practical work as required in practical classes
- To assist student(s) with motor skills difficulties -To support positive student behaviour.
- To contribute to successful educational experiences under the direction of the teacher.

### ***Beyond the classroom***

- To organise the student before and after class
- To accompany the student where necessary during breaks from class.
- To develop a rapport with the student and to mentor him/her
- To assist the student(s) to develop social skills To be a conduit of information between SEN student(s) and school personnel

## **The role of the Deputy Principal**

The role of the Principal and Board of Management are outlined in the relevant legislation.

- Timetabling and review of students receiving learning support
- Liaising with teachers re timetable
- Preparation of SN1 and SN2 (application for resource hours)
- Liaising with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser)
- Liaising with the NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) Psychologist and other agencies
- Liaising with the SNAs

## **The role of parents/guardians**

- Parents/guardians have a key role in relation to this area.
- Providing the school with as much information as possible in the form of assessment, Primary School reports, students needs and help they have received in the past.
- Talking and listening to their child about support they are receiving.
- Meeting with the resource team and subject teachers to advise, consult and be informed on the nature of their child's needs.
- Providing complimentary support at home that supports their child's programme of work.
- Encouraging their child to find comfortable ways of learning that suits them.
- Updating school personnel with relevant information as required.

## **The role of the student**

- To attend regularly and punctually
- To engage as fully as possible in mainstream and support classes
- To be involved where appropriate in setting learning targets with their support teachers.

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Note: Students who do not engage fully with the SEN provision will have this provision reviewed. In some cases the provision may be withdrawn.

### **COMMUNICATION / CUMARSÁID**

The need for effective communication will require opportunities to convey and exchange information among all the partners.

- Taking consideration of confidentiality into account, an annual whole school information meeting is held on the first day of school to identify special needs students and to convey information to staff. This will be updated as required throughout the year.
- The school will endeavour through contact with parents/guardians to inform them of the provision made for their child and the issues relating to special education and their rights and responsibilities in this regard.
- Ongoing information for Parents – the school is open to suggestions and improvements in this regard
- Ongoing staff development:
  - Library resources
  - Online strategies for teachers
  - Planning time

### **IDENTIFICATION OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS / AITHEANTAS DALTAÍ LE RIACHTANAIS SPEISIALTA OIDEACHAIS**

*The procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs include the following:*

#### **(a) Information from parents/guardians**

Parents/guardians have an obligation, on enrolment, to make known to the school authorities details of any previously diagnosed disability or special educational need and to make available to the school reports of examinations or

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assessment tests which have been previously carried out.

Consultation with individual parents/guardians who express concern is an important way to gather information to assist in the identification process.

### **(b) Liaison with the Primary School/other Second Level school**

Parents/guardians are required to sanction the release of any relevant information from the Primary School on transfer.

Members of the Learning support/ Resource department will visit the ‘feeder’ Primary schools in May to discuss the learning needs of students identified during the entrance assessment.

Students transferring from another second level school are required to sanction the release of any relevant information to this school on transfer.

### **(c) Initial testing**

Enrolling students are required to take initial assessments for the purpose of profiling students. These group tests will be supplemented, where necessary, by individual testing following entry in the autumn

### **(d) Staff referrals**

These are an important means of identification. The professional judgement of staff members working on a daily basis with students is an essential method of identification.

Additionally, information from assessments given by the guidance counsellor assists in identifying students.

### **(e) Consultation with appropriate support agencies**

Relevant information may be available from other sources that will assist the school in identifying learning needs and making appropriate provision.

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### **Where a student is not benefiting from the education programme**

Where the principal is of the opinion that a student is not benefiting from the educational programme provided in the school, the principal in consultation with the parents/guardians of the student, shall arrange an assessment of the student to be carried out.

(Education for Persons with special Education Needs Act 2004; 3.3)

If the Parents/Guardians are unhappy with the manner of the assessment, made under Section 3 above, they may appeal to the Appeals Board

(Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004; 6.)

## **THE ORGANISATION OF THE PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION / EAGRÚ SHOLÁTHAR OIDEACHAIS SPEISIALTA**

### **Curriculum**

Coolmine endeavours to provide all students with the broadest range of subject options throughout their school lives. If required the curriculum will be altered or customised to meet the specific requirements of a child with learning difficulties.

Any such alterations will be done in consultation with all concerned (i.e. student, parent/guardians, teachers, resource department and management).

Once identified, a pupil will be supported in his/her learning to the greatest extent possible within the resources available to the school. In as far as is practicable a student will remain in his/her base class and will only be withdrawn where it is absolutely necessary.

### **Participation in school programmes**

Students with special educational needs are actively encouraged to take a full part in extracurricular activities. The health and safety of all students and staff dictates that the individual needs of students be considered in each situation. Inclusion in school activities is seen as a key element in fostering self-esteem and personal growth.

The following provisions are used to support students:

- A reduced curriculum with additional support in the core subjects
- Additional support in subjects during Irish and/or languages. In certain circumstances pupils may be withdrawn from other subjects.
- Special needs assistant in class
- Support in examination techniques for students approved for Reasonable Accommodation in the Certificate Examinations
- A number of Meitheal students are available to support students with learning difficulties as appropriate
- Choosing Options: The transitional times in school are a time of choice. It is very important that all students make wise choices. This is especially important for students who have learning difficulties. A number of key personnel are available to consult and advise students and parents at these critical junctures in the students' careers.

An individual student may be supported by any or a range of the above.

### **Team Teaching**

Where possible a collaborative team teaching approach to learning support will be actively encouraged.

**The use of two ex-quota positions for learning support and resource is central to the provision of support.**

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The allocation of resource hours will vary depending on the school's intake. The deployment of staff to students is based on the DES allocation and the decisions made by the SENO in relation to the school's need. The areas of literacy and numeracy are seen as essential to independent living and resources are allocated accordingly.

### **The deployment of subject specialist teachers**

Subject specialist teachers working with individuals or in small groups are critical to the success of the programmes for these students. Hours are allocated across the staff to access the specialist knowledge required for individual subject areas.

### **Whole school approach**

The school is pursuing a policy of inclusion to the greatest extent possible and every year SEN information is shared with staff to promote a Whole School Approach. A number of strategies are employed to support this:

- a) In school Staff Development Days and access to other relevant courses
- b) The provision of library and support materials
- c) Ongoing communication between the Learning Support/ Resource Department and the teaching staff.

## **PLANNING / PLEANÁIL**

This is a prerequisite for all effective teaching and learning and is especially so for students with special educational needs.

### **Schemes of work**

Teachers involved in learning support work are required to furnish schemes of work in order to update students' files each term. These schemes set out targets and class planning in advance of the lessons.



## **Individual Education Plans**

Individual Education Plans may be considered for students where it is possible.

***Ratified on 30 / 09 / 2015***



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